

Army Selects IAV

Story by Gary Sheftick and Michele Hammonds

Interim Armored Vehicle

THE Army has chosen the family of wheeled armored vehicles that will equip the Fort Lewis, Wash., brigade combat teams that are the initial units of the Army's transformation force.

The Army signed a contract with a subsidiary of General Motors to produce 2,131 Light Armored Vehicles over the next six years at a cost just under \$4 billion. The company — GM General Dynamics Land Systems — is the same firm that now builds LAVs, known as the LAV III, for the Marine Corps, Canadian forces, Saudi Arabian military and the Australian army.

The Army's LAV, which should be delivered to the first interim brigade combat teams at Fort Lewis in fiscal year 2002, will be produced in two major variants: the Infantry Carrier Vehicle and the Mobile Gun System.

Configurations of the ICV will include mortar carrier, anti-tank guided missile, reconnaissance, fire support, engineer support, medical evacuation, NBC reconnaissance and commander's vehicles. The MGS and the fire support and NBC vehicles are still in the development stages.

All of the LAVs will be deployable by C-130 and larger aircraft. They will

have a maximum speed of 60 miles per hour and a range of 300 miles on a tank of fuel.

"The vehicle will be swift, easily

maintainable and include features designed

for the safety of our soldiers," said LTG Paul Kern, director of the Army Acquisition Corps and military deputy to the assistant secretary of the Army for acquisition, logistics and technology.

The LAV's armor protection will stop 50-caliber bullets and protect against 152 mm airburst shells, Kern said.

The LAV's tires can be inflated or deflated from inside the vehicle to adapt to surfaces ranging from deep mud

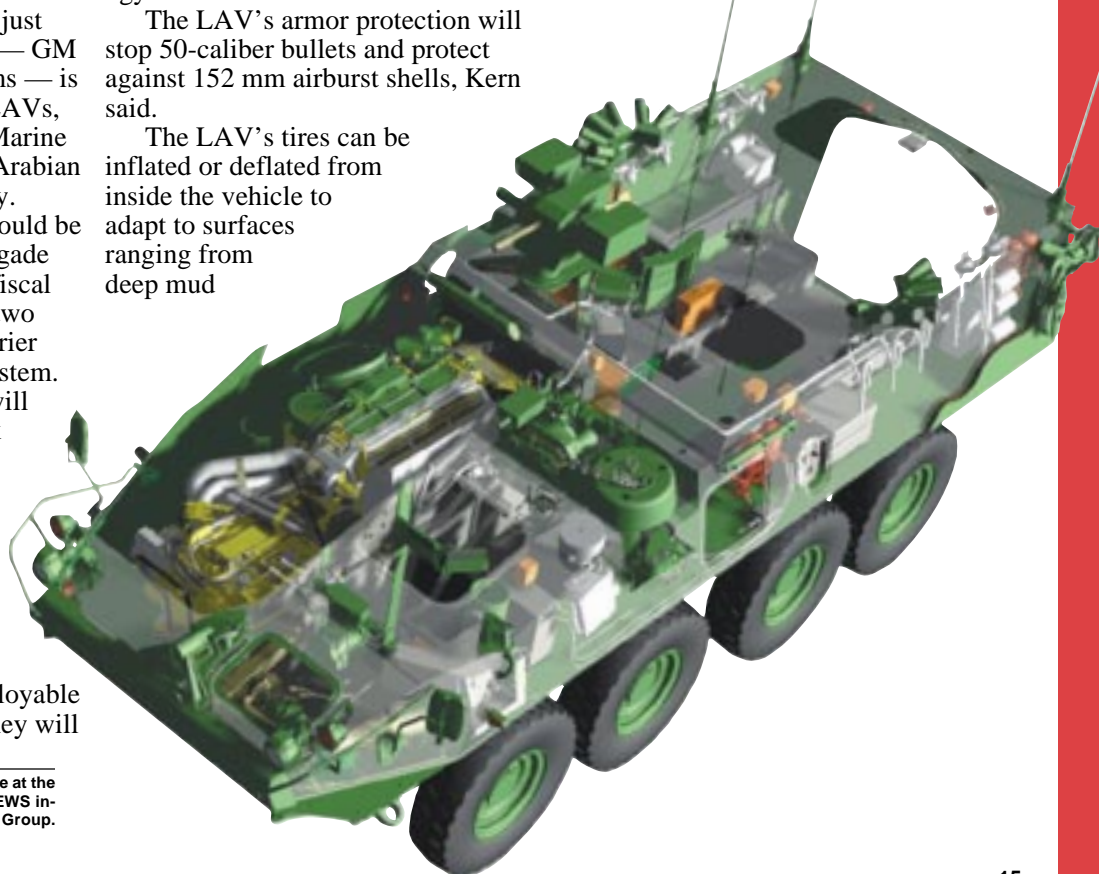
to hardtop, and it has run-flat tires, a built-in fire-suppression system and self-recovery winch, he said.

The vehicles also run quieter than the current armored personnel carriers, increasing their "stealth," and they will reduce logistics costs, making the IBCTs an affordable alternative to today's heavy brigades, Kern said.

One of the Army's transformation goals is to be able to deploy brigade combat teams anywhere in the world within 96 hours, a division in 120 hours and five divisions within 30 days, according to Army Chief of Staff GEN Eric K. Shinseki.

The LAV III is considered an "interim armored vehicle" because it is not the final vehicle that will equip the transformation "objective force" of the future.

"This is not an experimental force," Kern said of the IBCT, "rather it represents a force capable of meeting the needs of regional commanders in chief, while concurrently assisting the Army in developing doctrine to meet 21st-century threats." □



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